



**March 12, 2018**

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### **Spotlight on Success – Inprentus**

Inprentus has been a client of the Illinois SBDC at Champaign County EDC for over five years; Since its beginnings as a DOE-SBIR funded start-up in the University of Illinois Research Park Small Business Incubator, Enterprise works through its successful first round of investment, and transition to a private manufacturing facility still located in Champaign, IL. Inprentus manufactures a type of high-precision scientific optic used at national-scale scientific facilities, such as Argonne National Laboratory outside of Chicago, and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory at the University of California Berkeley. Inprentus' product, called a diffraction grating, is an optical element used in instruments such as telescopes, monochromators and spectrometers to both control and select desired wavelengths of light. Inprentus diffraction gratings are a core component of synchrotron spectrometry instrumentation, which scientists use to discover and characterize new material properties in life science, engineering and physics research.

In January of this year, Inprentus announced the final total of \$2.5M for the Series A round of private funding. This infusion of capital will enable Inprentus to more aggressively pursue new business in both its current synchrotron market as well as respond to requests from new markets. Inprentus is now manufacturing and fulfilling customer orders for its diffraction grating products. With a full complement of management and technical team members on board, Inprentus will now focus on revenue growth with current product and expansion into adjacent markets through R&D innovation and international business development efforts.

Ron van Os, Inprentus' CEO commented, *"With our manufacturing operation in place and deliveries rolling out the door we will now focus on advancing our capabilities to produce diffraction grating products for markets such as laser systems and higher volume optics instrumentation. We will also move to broaden our focus to include new opportunities in Asia and Europe."*



Included in that market expansion are two international business trips planned for this calendar year, both supported by CUSBDC and ITC funds. Through connections at the CUSBDC, Inprentus learned of the ISTEP program to support international trade in Illinois and was selected to receive funding for both trips. [\[Read more\]](#)

## **SBDC's In The News – Illinois SBDC at Champaign County EDC – Illinois PTAC at Bradley University's**

### **Wired in: Indi Rupassara**

**INDU RUPASSARA**, CEO of FruitVaccine Inc., founded this company at the University of Illinois Research Park last year, to develop a fruit-based edible vaccine for the human respiratory syncytial virus (hRSV) as the first project. FruitVaccine Inc has received an I-Start Award from the Research Park in Champaign, and an award from the city of Champaign through the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County EDC. [\[Read more\]](#)

### **Local business to help manufacture 9/11 monument**

A central Illinois business is going to help manufacture a portion of the Tower of Voices monument at the Flight 93 National Memorial. The National Park Service select [Fugate Inc.](#), a musical instrument manufacturing company based in Washington, to help with the project. Owner Brett Fugate worked with the Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) at Bradley University's Turner Center for Entrepreneurship in the Foster College of Business, to prepare the proposal for the National Park Service.

[\[Read more\]](#)

## **PTAC News - Congratulations**

The Illinois PTACs return this week from the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) 2018 Spring Training Conference and Membership Meeting held in Jacksonville, FL, March 4-8, 2018. Our Illinois PTAC Program Manager, Darryl Thomas and 8 PTACs Directors and Counselors were in attendance. Several of the Illinois delegation attended the optional Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) pre-conference training.

Special recognition goes out to Rita Haake and Chris Hollingsworth, as well as Mary Turner. During the Conference Rita Haake, Director of the Illinois PTAC at College of DuPage became Illinois' first Certified Procurement Professional (CPP). Rita as well as several other PTAC Directors had received the Certified Contracting Assistance Specialist designation prior to the advent of the new certification.

APTAC leadership elections were held and Chris Hollingsworth, PTAC Director at the Joseph Center was elected to the board of directors. Chris replaced Mary Turner, Director at the Central Illinois PTAC as the Region 6 Board Member. Mary who is set to retire this Summer was also honored for her many years of service to APTAC.

Please join us in offering Rita, Chris and Mary very HUGE congratulations ! ! ! ! Great Job ! ! ! !

## **Network News and Moves – Conferences - Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward and Rural Community ED Conference**



### **Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward: Creating Opportunity for Female- and Minority-Owned Businesses (Upcoming)**

The Illinois Department of Transportation will host Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward on March 19 and 20 at the President Abraham Lincoln Springfield Hotel and Bank of Springfield Center. The two-day conference provides female- and

minority-owned businesses with opportunities to make connections and develop skills to increase their competitiveness.

"Building a high-quality, diverse workforce strengthens the Illinois economy and promotes more competition on state projects," said Gov. Bruce Rauner. "Getting our small business owners the tools they need to succeed is a small investment that pays off for years to come." [\[Read more\]](#)

### **'Rural Community Economic Development Conference'**

#### *Designing Our Future to Reach New Heights*

On March 7 and 8, Annette Fulgenzi & Robert Kerr represented EIT at the Rural Community Economic Development Conference in Springfield. The conference highlighted the "efforts to realize the full potential of rural Illinois".

Efforts include:

- Creating sustainable places designed to attract individuals to visit, work, and live
- Strategies to develop and foster growth through diversity, the arts, and creative revitalization
- Identification of rural funding resources, rural manufacturing potential, building child development networks
- Assuring environmentally sound practices while emphasizing existing assets in rural region.

[\[Learn more about the conference\]](#)

### **13<sup>th</sup> Annual 2018 Innovation Celebration**

The Illinois SBDC at the Champaign County EDC is honored to sponsor the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual 2018 Innovation Celebration. This year Kathie Cravens, International Trade Specialist extraordinaire at the Illinois SBDC ITC is a finalist in the Entrepreneurial Excellence: Advocacy Award category! This award goes to those who "Actively engage, encourage, coach and mentor entrepreneurs in the community, and provide extensive support to help them achieve success."

More about the event:

*About Innovation Celebration:* Innovation Celebration provides recognition of those individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions, taken risks, and provided leadership to ensure the continuing economic success of Champaign County, the ongoing success of the University's economic development mission, and the growth of entrepreneurial talent and energy in our community. Innovation Celebration is not merely an award for accomplishment, but a benchmark of success for those outstanding individuals, organizations and corporations who are nominated and selected to receive this prestigious award. Innovation Celebration is hosted by the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the University of Illinois, Parkland College, and community sponsors. Learn more at <http://innovationcelebration.com/>.

*What:* 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Innovation Celebration

*Date:* Thursday, March 29, 2018

*Time:* 5:30 – 8:30 PM

*Location:* Parkland College - Student Union, 2400 West Bradley Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821

*Website:* <http://innovationcelebration.com/>

*Facebook event link:* <https://www.facebook.com/events/103495743775902/>

*Event hashtag:* #INNCEL

### **Maximizing Neoserra – Neoserra Closes on 3/13/18 at 8:00 AM**



Data entry for February 2018 will end at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, March 13, 2018. Please look for Neoserra error reporting emails from Tom Becker so you get credit for all advising time and milestones that you enter.

## **Valued Resources – Proximity & Producteev'**



In the world of logistics [Proximity](#) provides integration of data used by individuals and organizations. Companies requiring logistics information on parts and services used by the Government and its suppliers; providing referenced links to regulatory information such as Government and Industry standards and specifications mandated by the Government and cited in solicitations and Mil Specs. This integrated approach allows data to be used in an organized connect the dots fashion including fulfilling the contractors' needs to obtain data on daily procurement opportunities published by the U.S. Government as well as State and local Governments. Illinois PTACs have access to this great resource to help serve their clients.



[Producteev](#) is your pen and paper to do list on overdrive. Manage projects between multiple users, set recurring events, and track both large scale projects and the smaller steps along the way that make the big to-do's possible. It is ideal for keeping up with your own work needs as well as assigning tasks to employees near and far.

## **SBA Workshop - Small Business Financing from the Banker's Perspective**

Accessing capital can be a major challenge for an entrepreneur trying to start or grow small business. Attend this free workshop with representatives from Wells Fargo Bank to learn more about loan programs designed to help small business owners succeed.

DATE: Wed, March 14, 2018  
TIME: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM CDT  
LOCATION: The Shops at North Bridge - Microsoft Store  
520 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60611

**[\[Registration Link\]](#)**

## **Webinars – Digital Marketing Trends - Cybersecurity** **Digital Marketing Trends for Small Businesses in 2018**



**Where should small businesses focus their energy to make the most of their time?**

Today's consumers expect businesses to provide experiences tailored to their needs, interests, and habits. [52 percent of consumers say they're likely to switch brands if a company doesn't make an effort to personalize communications to them.](#)

If marketing messages aren't relevant and easily read on mobile devices, you can expect consumers to move on. It's now more critical than ever to get the right message to the right person at the right time.

Constant Contact will be hosting an exclusive webinar to share some digital marketing trends that all small businesses should be aware of this year, including:

- *How to use data to make smarter marketing decisions*
- *How to create a more personalized email messages*
- *How to do more business and save time with simple automation*

Webinar details:

DATE: Wed, Mar 21, 2018  
TIME: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM CDT

Use the registration link below to spread the news and invite your clients to join the webinar.

**[\[Registration Link\]](#)**

## **Cybersecurity: Protect your Business and your Clients**

While big companies make headlines, small businesses are increasingly being targeted by cybercriminals seeking economic gain through the exploitation of cyber systems. Recent reports indicate upwards of 50 percent of small businesses have had their data breached in the last year. These efforts place a small business owner at risk of losing customers' information, loss of reputation, and loss of intellectual property – all of which have real financial consequences. This webinar discusses best practices devised by the public and private sectors to help you mitigate the risk of a cyber-breach and the associated issues that represents. Topics include sources of threats, types of countermeasures, and additional resources. Take the first step to secure your business by participating in this webinar.

Webinar details:

DATE: Wed, March 14, 2018

TIME: 10:30 am - 11:30 am CDT

[\[Registration Link\]](#)

## **Blog - 4 Ways Mom and Pop Businesses Can Outshine Their Bigger Competitors**

March 29 is National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day—a day to celebrate the value that family-owned small businesses bring to their communities. These days, Mom and Pop businesses face many challenges as they compete against larger retailers and service providers with expansive budgets. But Mom and Pops have some strengths bigger companies don't. By leveraging them, they cannot only compete successfully but also excel.

[\[Here are 4 advantages small businesses have over big businesses\]](#)

## **America's SBDC Network - #SBDC DAY is March 21st**

The America's SBDC Network [#SBDC Day is coming soon on March 21<sup>st</sup>](#). Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the latest special announcement about #SBDC Day and the new promotional toolkit that is available for you to help promote SBDC Day. Take advantage of the additional resources available on the Members Marketing Resources webpage [here](#) or click the SBDC Day Toolkit below.

### **SBDC Day Toolkit**



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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** email is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and the Illinois Department of Commerce's Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology (OEIT) each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our partners and stakeholders with updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please feel free to share this email with interested partners. Please email [Neeru.Singh@illinois.gov](mailto:Neeru.Singh@illinois.gov) any information for future editions.

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